

111421 Sermon Hebrews 10:19-25 **True Heart in full Assurance of Faith**

When I was in the lower grades of elementary school, my father, who was a Methodist pastor, said to me, "Young, why don't you become a pastor when you grow up?" I don't know if it's because I'm the eldest son, but anyway, I remember my father telling me this over a long period of time. Then I always answered like this. 'Never! Even if I die, I won't be a pastor!'

However, when I was in the second semester of my first year of high school, I personally met Jesus. I just realized that the love of Jesus was for me. You don't know how long I cried. One day, I went to the early morning prayer service and prayed, and I heard the voice of God. "Young, won't you go to seminary?" I thought, "if I go to a seminary, I'll become a pastor, boy, I must have heard it wrong". And at that time, there was also a wrong perception that 'seminary is a place where people who do not well in their coursework go to seminary or go to seminary if everything else doesn't work'. So I hated going to seminary.

And in fact, my younger brother wanted to become a pastor since he was little. So I thought perhaps God came to me the wrong person and I prayed, "God, no matter how much I think about it, I am not a good candidate for becoming a pastor. I have a very introverted personality, and there are things I am better at than others, so I will succeed instead, and go to church regularly and donate a lot later. And if someone who goes to church lives a successful life, wouldn't God be glorified?"

I was the one who said, 'I don't want to be a pastor even if I die!', but I become a pastor.. ? That's not easy, right? Then, after a while, I heard that voice again from the depths of my heart, "This journey can be done if you deny yourself!

You may have to die every day!” This was later revealed, but my wife thought from elementary school, when she grew up, she would not marry a pastor even if she died.

Until God called me, I used to think that I was the most special person in the world. I have always won the biggest prize in my junior high school by representing the school in drawing competitions, in state and national competitions. In those days, there were many invention contests and radio assembly contests, and in the radio assembly contest, I got 1st place in school and 2nd place in state. I was also good at singing, so I sang a lot as a school representative since elementary school, and in middle school, I played the flute a lot in front of people. There was a time when my music teacher told me to major in music, my science teacher told me to major in science, and my art teacher told me I had to do art, so I felt proud of myself as being more special than others.

Until I was in middle school, I had no choice but to go to church because my father was a pastor. I remember thinking about how to run away without fellowship after service. I read the Bible only at church, or read the Bible to get pocket money from my parents. That was it. Even vaguely, I thought that God existed long ago in the Bible. But after meeting Jesus personally, I changed my mind. In the book of Genesis, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, was not only alive in those days but also now, and made me realize for the first time that God is my God and the God of Young Choi.

It made me believe that Jesus, who died miserably on the cross, loved not only the people who were there 2,000 years ago, but that he died on the cross for me because he loved me. A desire to go far for God has arisen in me! So,

I decided to become a pastor in order to love God and to love people.

Today's Hebrews 10:19-20, "Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh)."

Here, the word confidence is used in the original Greek Bible, [parresia], which means "freedom to speak, speak openly." To put it simply, you can confidently enter the Holy of Holies without feeling guilty.

The basis of confidence is the merit of the blood of Jesus, the blood of Jesus on the cross. I once talked about the sanctuary and the most holy place in a sermon for the month of July. Within the sanctuary, there is a special place which is divided by the curtain. It is the 'Holy of Holies', where only the high priest could enter once a year.

The Holy of Holies was covered with a very thick curtain to prevent anyone from approaching it. According to the Jewish tradition, the curtain is 8 to 9 inches thick cloth, 60 feet high and 20 feet wide. Why was the curtain so big and heavy? It means that the wall of sin between God and human is big and heavy. It means that sinners cannot have easy access to the 'Presence of the Holy God.'

But in Matthew 27, when Jesus was crucified, it was written that the curtain was torn from top to bottom. The importance of this is that after Jesus' crucifixion, the first thing that God had done was to split the curtain of the Holy of Holies. As a result, the place that was hidden from the world for thousands of years had been revealed to the whole world. Therefore, from then on, anyone can come to the holy place of God because of Jesus!

Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies for the remission of sins. People of Israel in the Old Testament times answered the questions like this. "Who is the most important person among people?" "The high priest." "Which place is the most important?" "It is the Holy of Holies." "When is the most important day of all day?" "It is the Day of Atonement." "What is the most important thing?" "It is the forgiveness of sins." In other words, on the Day of Atonement, the most important person, the high priest, enters the most important Holy of Holies for the forgiveness of sins. By dying on the cross, Jesus accomplished the forgiveness of sins for us.

The words people hate to hear the most in the church today are the words repentance and sin. On the other hand, people really like the word blessing. However, it is truly amazing to know the biblical meaning of the word repentance, and it contains more grace than the word blessing. Repentance is called [metanoeo] in Greek, and its original meaning is to turn around, to return. We often say that lying is a sin, stealing is a sin, and murdering is a sin, but the true meaning of sin in the Bible is [Hamartia] missing the target. Here God is our target, God is the purpose of life.

However, true repentance is not living with guilt, but returning to God. You will be able to enter the Holy of Holies, where you would not have dared to go before. Because of the blood of Jesus Christ! Repentance is returning to God, and the purpose of repentance is restoration and healing. Your relationship with God is restored, and there is healing in your relationship with people.

Now, every day, relying on the blood of Jesus Christ to receive the forgiveness of sins, and as verse 22 says, "let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith." If you look closely at today's scriptures, verse 22 is talking about faith, verse 23 about hope, and verse 24 about love. From the time of

the Early Church, what the believers held on to despite many persecutions was "faith, hope, and love."

Until the moment we stand before the Lord again, we have a mission left to us, and that is to be a witness of the Lord, and today Hebrews 10 specifically expresses it this way. Verses 24 and 25 says, "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching." It is not enough for you to believe in God alone. Obviously, today's Bible tells us to take care of each other. And no matter how dark the world seems; we encourage each other so that we can share in love and good deeds.

Here comes another surprise! "Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some." I don't think it's just the case with COVID-19. This is a passage that shows even in the early church, there was a tendency to abolish gatherings.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus, let us strive to gather together and rejoice in boldly returning to God. When you come before God, do not come out with a sense of guilt, but as the Bible says today, "Come to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith", hope, and love. I hope and pray that Fairfield Grace could be a community of faith that truly worships God, makes every effort to learn the Bible, and where true service and sharing begin from near to the ends of the earth. Fairfield Grace, May God's grace and peace and blessing be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.